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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
1 June 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam
(As of 1:30 P.M. EDT)

Saigon

1. The press reports that a large demonstration took place in Saigon tonight (Vietnam time) to protest the grenade attack on Thich Thien Minh and the refusal of the US and Vietnamese governments to accede to Buddhist demands. There are other indications, however, that the Buddhist leadership in Saigon does not intend to use the Thien Minh incident as an excuse for breaking off its negotiation with the GVN.

2. The crowd of several thousand is said to have taken to the streets after attending a rally at the Vien Hoa Dao pagoda. They had been addressed there by Buddhist leader Thich Ho Giac who has been a member of the delegation meeting with Thieu and Ky.

3. According to press reports, Ho Giac took a comparatively moderate line in stating that the church and government were taking steps toward a peaceful solution of their differences and that the government had already agreed to expand its ruling council to include civilian elements. Ho Giac is reported to have called for the resignation of Chief of State Thieu, but did not demand the general dissolution of the present government.

4. The Military Directorate of the GVN announced tonight (Vietnam time) that it would double the number of its members by adding 10 civilians representing various mass organizations, religions and political parties. The government broadcast stated that the new civilian representatives would join the Directorate on the 6th of June.

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5. The announcement of the enlargement of the Directorate and the more moderate line taken by Ho Giac are fairly consistent with previous remarks made by Prime Minister Ky to a US official shortly after the conclusion of the Buddhist-GVN talks of 1 June. Ky took an optimistic view of the situation, saying the Buddhists had agreed to call off the "struggle" and would no longer demand the resignation of Thieu and Ky.

Hue

6. There are no reports of injury to American personnel in Hue. In addition to the attack on US installations, MACV reports that the student "struggle" forces have burned and looted five homes belonging to GVN officials, including that of Colonel Khoa. The US Consul at Hue also reports that the students succeeded in breaking into a government warehouse and seizing a large number of weapons, including BARs, sub-machine guns, carbines and pistols.

7. According to a US Embassy report, Prime Minister Ky has given orders to I Corps Commander Lam to employ 1st Division troops to restore order in Hue. The US senior advisor to the 1st Division has been told by the division commander, General Nhuan, that he intends to take his troops into the city and will advise Buddhist leaders in Hue to keep their followers off the streets.

8. USMC General Walt has advised General Westmoreland that an ARVN engineer battalion known to be siding with the struggle group is reported to be mining a large bridge north of the Hai Van pass (between Hue and Da Nang). General Westmoreland has ordered General Walt to move US troops to take over the security of the bridge.

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